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sea and hear it moan, and we feel that nature has rewarded the artist for his ardent wooing of her.

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Mr. Meakin is essentially a lover of nature's moods as reflected in his numerous reproductions of landscapes and marines, but he has a feeling for form and line in figure work, as is evidenced in two or three studies made while abroad. It would require more than one visit to this immense collection to particularize more than has been done here; it is difficult to imbibe the beauties of a picture with the masses surging about you in kaleidoscopic confusion, flitting from one to another in picturesque nervousness of manner, and full of conflicting notions verbally expressed. The attendance has been a distinctively representative one; cultured people whose confidence in Mr Meakin led them to pay this early tribute to his untiring genius.



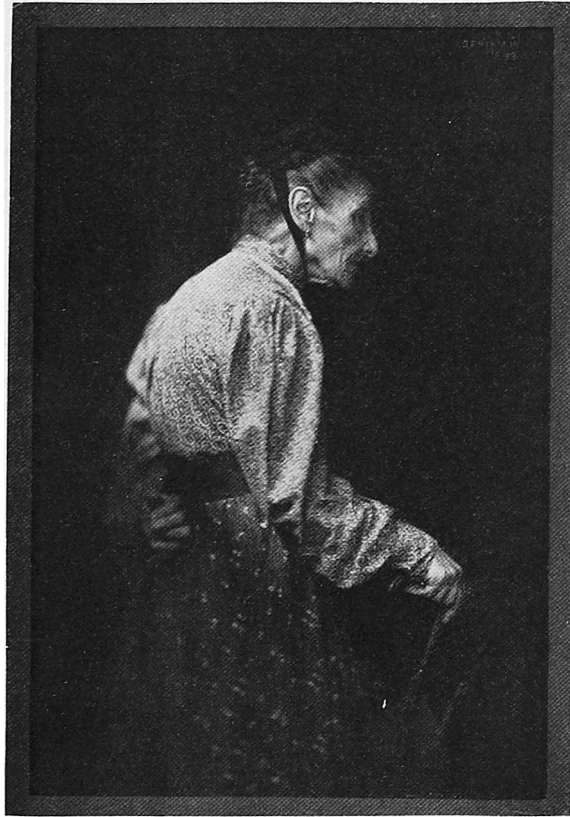
MOONRISE, WHITEWATER VALLEY. No. 54

I. BENJAMIN, PHOTOGRAPHER

I saw in Columbus this last summer the finest group of photographs which it has ever been my fortune to look upon. They were six and made a series of character studies which in every respect from choice of subject to their black frames and very arrangement upon the screen showed the thought and taste of an artist. I referred to these somber gems in a recent article, and now, thanks to the kindness of their maker, I am able to offer the entire group to the readers of this magazine.

I. Benjamin is the name signed to them, and I. Benjamin I was glad to meet at that gathering of Ohio's leading photographers. Unlike Clarence White, whose charming compositions I tried recently to celebrate, Mr. Benjamin is a professional photographer—the lead-

ing one in Cincinnati, so his admiring colleagues told me. Asked if he could afford to do such work as this for his patrons—if they were willing to pay for it—his reply was half-joking, half-reproachful. "Of course not; they would not have them. I could not sell this sort of work. No one but a few of you artists cares for it. I can make as bad photographs as any of them, and my customers generally



FRAU ROSENHEIM, FROM PHOTOGRAPH BY I. BENJAMIN

insist upon having that kind. These are my recreation; they represent the pleasure that I get out of my art."

Quite well could I understand the pleasure of such achievement, as I turned once more to that marvelous group upon the wall. The pictures were hung in such fashion that the figures seemed to be ascending a little incline, at the summit of which was the superb portrait of Mr. Farny. From here they descended again, the one at the foot



PORTRAIT OF OLD MORAN
FROM PHOTOGRAPH BY
I. BENJAMIN

OHIO SALON, 1898
PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL SALON, 1898
GRAND PRIZE, OHIO, 1898
SILVER MEDAL, AMERICAN INSTITUTE, 1898

of the hill on the right being the poor old woman with her hand on her rheumatic back. The first one was probably the pilgrim of the bundle and staff with his picturesque stretch of countenance. Then followed the genial gentleman from the "auld sod," leaning on his cane. The pose of this figure is so expressive, so perfectly "natural," as the rustic critics say, that it seems to me at moments to be the finest of the series. But then when I look at old "Mrs. Rheumatiz," I cheerfully award her the palm. Here is character in every line. It takes imagination and dramatic sense to put the putty-like model into such poses as these. They are far more characteristic and individual than the subject would ever have taken by himself amid the strange surroundings of the studio. The artist has had the skill to bring out the very essence of these personalities, to make them reveal themselves.

The lighting of these pictures could not be improved. "Rather forced," observes a painter friend. I should say so! Herein lies the photographer's art. As well let the camera go ahead and take pictures all by itself without thought or intelligence as to prohibit this "forcing." This skillful concentration of light on the head, this judicious tempering of its power upon the hands and yet more upon the drapery, is exactly what makes these works *pictures*, and separates them from the photographs of the rural "gallery" show-case.

The average up-to-date landscape painter has scruples about taking liberties with nature. If the scene before him offers a pleasing arrangement well and good; if it does not, it is all the same to him. He will not "force" things. He may hit upon something artistic once in a dozen times, or he may not. The great masters of the landscape art in the past did force things. Yes, they were masters, and



STUDY FROM PHOTOGRAPH
BY I. BENJAMIN

they used a master's privilege. They filled themselves full of nature, and then allowed their own personalities some word in the final expression. And they gave us something worth while nine times out of ten.

We are sometimes told that this artistic quality is necessarily lacking in photography; that the camera is hopelessly impersonal. I claim that these achievements of Mr. Benjamin's contain much more of the personal element of their creator than do most of the



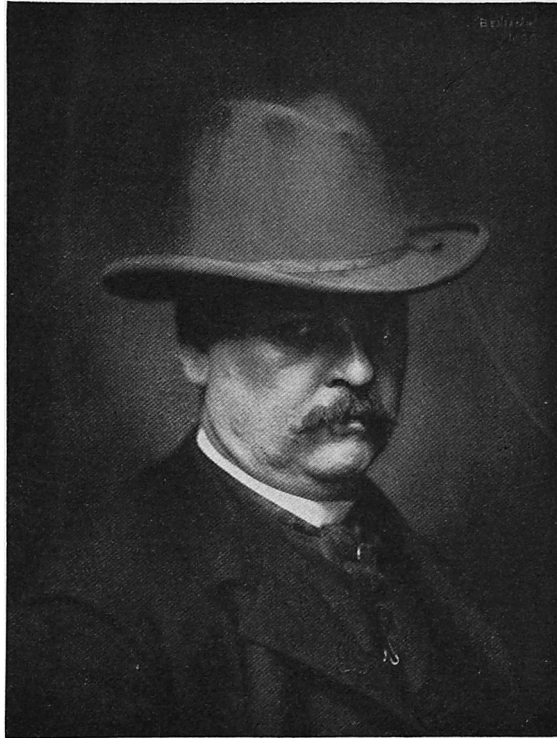
PORTRAIT OF MR. J. H. SHARPE
FROM PHOTOGRAPH, BY I. BENJAMIN

paintings of this year of grace. They are what he has made them, and the good camera and the well-lighted studio are but the instruments in his hands. He knows their possibilities, to be sure, and their limitations. He knows his subjects as well, and it is in his good taste and sense of dramatic fitness that his strength lies, quite as much as in the skill with which he illuminates the focal point of his composition and veils the rest with kindly shadow. This knowing how to "ladle out" the light and to pour it over a figure in just the right amount is the result of much study, and so likewise up to a certain point is the skillful composition of a

picture; but taste must enter largely into this, and the sense of appropriateness is in great measure intuitive. Study of lighting and even of composition would never teach a man to arrange that picture of the old woman of the tired back, nor the man with a cane. The artist has grasped quickly their very personalities, he has summarized these good people in one quick flash. He has been interested in them individually, and given us the result of his brief but sympathetic study. It does "pay" to put heart and soul into one's work! And by the way, the heart and soul were not in the little box with the glass eye, but were the possession of I. Benjamin.

If my name were H. F. Farny, I would be glad to have such a portrait of myself as Mr. Benjamin has given us of that distinguished painter. It is a strong, serious face, but its lurking good humor shines through as does the light amid its hovering shades. A blending of expressions is far more interesting than a simple emotion, just as a play of sunshine and shadow has a charm beyond that of either a leaden sky or garish noonday. These broad shadows are as translucent as in Prudhon's paintings of old, and the "quilting" of the fleshy cheek and the aggressive chin is an example of delicacy of modeling which in nowise weakens the sense of power beneath. The picture carries to a distance, where detail is lost, and grows more beautiful and intimate as you approach it. Like great works of all times, it is good to look upon from near or far.

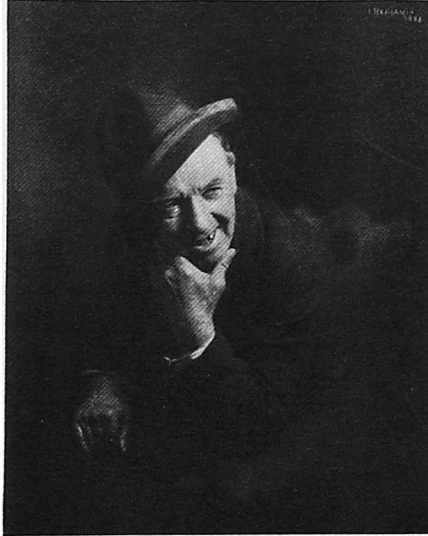
The portrait of J. H. Sharpe is that of another well-known artist of Cincinnati, and ought to please his painter soul. What fun to juggle with light and



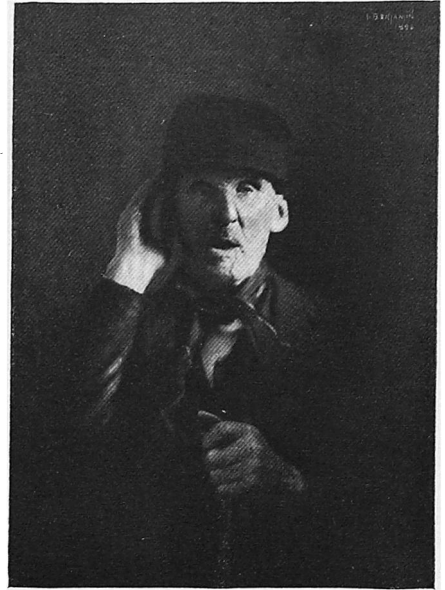
PORTRAIT OF H. F. FARNY
FROM PHOTOGRAPH, BY I. BENJAMIN

shadow like this! The beautiful old lady with the heavenly-thought expression seems to me less original, for her face would suggest the other world to almost any of us. There is no question about her reading her title clear—God bless her! "Hey!" is the label I would give to the old codger of the vacuous expression. There is no complexity of emotions here. "A Franz Hals," cried my friend, Hamlin G., when we came to the jovial jester of the expansive smile. For a man who professes to disdain the old masters and glories in his ignorance of them, this was a good guess. Our

Cincinnati Coquelin is arrayed in costume slightly modern for a Franz Hals, but that face with its laughing eyes and snaggy teeth would have delighted the old rollicker of Harlem Town. Could he have done them better?



STUDY OF OLD BARRIGAN
FROM PHOTOGRAPH, BY I. BENJAMIN



PORTRAIT OF OLD BARRIGAN
FROM PHOTOGRAPH, BY I. BENJAMIN

Mr. I. Benjamin, you are a true artist. You see beauty about you, and you translate it to us. I hope that you may continue your good work for many long years to come, and that we may often have the opportunity of enjoying it with you.

LORADO TAFT.